



THE FUTURE OF LEGAL PRACTICE SUMMIT

Earlier this year, the Law Society hosted its annual Future of Legal Practice Summit which delivers unique networking opportunities for PPC trainees and thought-provoking demonstrations and conversations around digital technologies, legal services and the future of the profession. Director general, Mark Garrett addressed a packed Lecture Theatre on the challenges and opportunities for the legal profession and legal-services market.



THE FUTURE OF LEGAL PRACTICE SUMMIT

There was a great buzz of activity through the Law School campus as the summit welcomed over 60 experts to highlight current and future-focused legal knowledge, innovation and technology trends for trainee solicitors during the 25 sessions, focusing on 'next-generation lawyering' (improving the practice of law for solicitors, clients and society), and practical perspectives on AI and legal tech.

Taking part in the discussion on 'High-impact lawyering – a passion for public law' were June Reardon (solicitor and chief parliamentary counsel), Faye Breen (deputy director general, Office of the Attorney General), Maria Browne (chief state solicitor) and Claire McGee (head of public policy, Law Society).

The topic 'Making pro bono legal services work for your firm' was addressed by Niamh Counihan (partner, Matheson), and Christopher Bowes (legal officer, FLAC)

Idriss Kechida (global data protection officer, OpenAI) discussed data protection and AI.

Angela Denning (CEO, Courts Service) shared her insights on the future for technology and the courts.





ICCC INTERNATIONAL CLIENT CONSULTATION COMPETITION

Congratulations to the Law Society team on being awarded the Nancy Schultz memorial award for Best Display of Counselling Skills at the International Client Consultation Competition ICCC in Glasgow. Pictured are Kayleigh Hussey (McCarthy & McCarthy) and Matthew Kenny (Gleeson McGrath Baldwin Solicitors) with coach Dr Rachael Hession.



ICC INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL MEDIATION COMPETITION

Well done to Katie Ward (Matheson), Rebecca Williams (Flynn O'Driscoll) and Rónán Boyle (Arthur Cox) who represented Ireland at the ICC International Commercial Mediation Competition. This internationally renowned mediation competition was hosted by the International Chamber of Commerce in Paris with 48 team from 30 countries participating. The Law Society team showed excellent mediation advocacy skills over 3 rounds and are pictured with coach John Lunney.

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW MOOT COURT COMPETITION

Congratulations to the Law Society team of Isobel Kenny, Emily Davis and Marcela Gonzalez with coach T P Kennedy on reaching the world finals of the International Environmental Law Moot Court Competition. For their engagement, courtesy, conviviality and interaction with other teams, they were awarded the Spirit of Stetson Award with Emily Davis ranked as the 7th best speaker internationally.



IRISH RED CROSS CORN ADOMNÁIN INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW COMPETITION.

Congratulations to the Law Society team for winning this year's Irish Red Cross Corn Adomnán International Humanitarian Law Competition.

The team competed against 11 other teams in a series of scenario exercises testing their knowledge and application of different areas of international humanitarian law, including the protection of cultural property, detention and humanitarian access.

A massive well done to team members Katie McCarthy (A&L Goodbody), Grace Oladipo (Arthur Cox LLP), and Sarah Scobie (Maples Group) with coach Paul Breslin.



NATIONAL NEGOTIATION COMPETITION

Congratulations to the Law Society team of Noor Choudry (Maples) and Meadhbh Jones (A&L Goodbody) on taking first place in the 2025 National Negotiation Competition. The team, coached by Ruth Tracey, overcame UCD's Ruth Morris and Mark McDwyer during the final session. The competition involves a team of two law students, 'representing' a party or client, negotiating either an international transaction or the resolution of an international dispute with an opposing team of two law students. Eight teams from Irish law schools participated in this year's competition, judged by a panel of legal practitioners. Across three rounds, participants negotiated scenarios that included an international sales-and-distribution agreement, a sports-management contract, and environmental, social and governance issues in a commercial contract.

The trophy was presented to the winning team by competition convenor John Lunney in his role as national representative of the International Negotiation Competition. UCD's Mark McDwyer picked up the award for 'outstanding negotiator' during the preliminary rounds, which was sponsored by the Mediator Academy. The winning Law Society team will now represent Ireland at the International Negotiation Competition, which will take place in London in July. The event, the oldest and most celebrated international legal negotiation competition for students from around the world, offers a unique educational programme focused on international legal practice. Wishing Noor and Meadhbh the best of luck.

PRICE MEDIA LAW MOOT COURT COMPETITION

Congratulations to the Law Society team of Aideen Mahon (Bird & Bird), Eve Reidy (McCann FitzGerald), Rebecca McKittrick (Coach, Matheson), Borbala Gyenge (McCann FitzGerald) and Alanna Grogan (DLA Piper) on reaching the semi-finals and top 10 in the world in the Price Media Law Moot Court Competition in Oxford.



INADR INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF DISPUTE RESOLUTION MEDIATION

Congratulations to the Law Society team of Gráinne Ní Fhrighil (DLA Piper), Kate Lyttle (William Fry) and Cian McAllister (Dillon Eustace) with coach Claire O'Mahony who were named as Best Client-Advocate Team in the prestigious InterNational Academy of Dispute Resolution (INADR) 2025 mediation competition in Tbilisi, Georgia. The team competed against 25 teams from all over the USA, EU and Asia to clinch the title.





ALUMNI EVENT ON IMMIGRATION LAW

The Diploma Centre recently hosted an Immigration Law Spotlight Event for alumni. The panel was chaired by Dr Thamil Venthan Ananthavinayagan (assistant principal at the Department of Justice) and speakers included Hilkka Becker (chair, International Protection Appeals Tribunal), Maria Hennessy (assistant protection officer, UNHCR), and Angel Bello Cortes (partner, Fragomen).



NEW PLAYERS WELCOME

The PPC Tag Rugby team is on fire this season, having won all their games in the current Tag Rugby league. Congratulations to all the players. The team play every Tuesday in Milltown, and are a very social welcoming group! New players always welcome.



HEC DEVELOPMENT CUP LEAGUE

Congratulations to the Blackhall ladies GAA football team on winning the All Ireland college competition final against Stranmillis University, Belfast. The HEC Development Cup League included teams from Marino Institute of Education; Cork College of Further Education; Mary Immaculate College Thurles, Drogheda Institute of Further Education; Stranmillis Belfast; Monaghan Institute; and Mayo College of Further Education.

ELECTRIC IRELAND HE GAA CORN CA

Congratulations to the Blackhall mens GAA football team on reaching the college championship final against TUD Blanchardstown. The keenly contested game finished with TUD Blanchardstown taking the win.





TRAINEES DELIVER WORKSHOPS FOR BUDDING LAWYERS DURING SOLICITORS OF THE FUTURE WEEK

Congratulations to all the trainees involved in the Solicitors of the Future week which saw 38 transition-year students from across Ireland take part in the Law Society Diploma Centre Solicitors of the Future programme, which allows pupils to learn about working in the legal sector.

Facilitated by Law Society staff, trainees, and experienced practitioners, the immersive programme featured expert-led workshops, court visits, law firm visits, a careers seminar, and a mini mock trial.

1. Vaishnavi Chandegave and Paul Mulready (Mason, Hayes & Curran) and Lauren Humphries (John O'Leary Solicitors)
2. Susanna Ingle (Matheson) and Niamh Newman (Dillon Eustace)

OUR STREET LAW EXPERIENCE

When we signed up for Street Law, neither of us knew much about the programme but we both thought that it sounded like a fun and worthwhile way to occupy our time outside of the lecture theatre. We both have an interest in education and public engagement, and we were excited by the opportunity to make the law more accessible to young people.

At the training weekend we learned to think about teaching in a way neither of us had ever thought about before and gained key skills like interactive teaching methods, how to quieten a rowdy classroom and lesson planning. On the last day of the training weekend, we were tasked with creating a lesson plan for the very first time. We had the idea to create a lesson plan based on sentencing, challenging the students' understanding of how the process works. We thought this would be of interest to the students given the extensive media coverage of the sentence handed down to Cathal Crotty in the Natasha O'Brien case. We taught this lesson plan to the students of Mercy Secondary School in Inchicore and elements of the lesson also informed our more informal session with the young people in Oberstown Detention Centre.

When we initially got paired with the school we had to reach out and arrange dates with the school's co-ordinator, who was extremely helpful and accommodated us at every step. We had a very large class of 38 students although it was rarely a full class. Teaching at the school was a steep learning curve for both of us, we had to navigate the students' differing levels of interest in the topics in an attempt to keep everyone engaged. Ultimately, we believe it was a very worthwhile and interesting experience for both us and the students. When we taught in Oberstown, it was an entirely new experience for the both of us. We had to shift our teaching strategy entirely as we were dealing with a much smaller group of 5 students at a time. We also had to be more aware of the content that we were teaching. The different setting allowed for a much more in-depth discussion. We came away from the experience with a new understanding of the justice system and I believe that we learned as much from this experience as we taught.

We both walked away from the experience having developed our skills in teaching and also with a new understanding of the law and the importance of accessibility in legal education. Street Law is a reminder that the real power of law lies not just in knowing it but in being able to share that knowledge.

Elisa Carey and Stacey Dunne pictured at the Street Law conferral with Justine Carty, Vice-Chairperson of the Law Society Education Committee.



Street Law and Taskmaster participants receive Certificate in Public Legal Education - Congratulations to all trainees who were recently awarded the Law Society Certificate in Public Legal Education at a ceremony celebrating successful completion of Street Law and Taskmaster education programmes.



SCHOOL TASKING REGIONAL FINAL SHOWCASES FUTURE LEGAL TALENT

The Law Society proudly hosted the highly anticipated 'School Tasking' All-Ireland Regional Final in March. School Tasking is an innovative outreach project designed to introduce primary school students to legal concepts through fun, interactive challenges inspired by the popular TV show Taskmaster. The initiative aims to make learning about the law accessible, enjoyable, and inspiring for young learners.

Launched in Ireland by the Law Society in 2024 under the leadership of John Lunney and Ruth Tracey, the program initially engaged five local primary schools. Following a successful pilot year, the project expanded significantly in 2025, with Trinity College Dublin joining the initiative and the Open University Belfast launching a parallel program in Northern Ireland. Over 30 universities across the UK and Ireland have now embraced School Tasking, highlighting its growing impact.

Nine enthusiastic teams advanced to the Regional Final after excelling in school-based sessions conducted over the previous six weeks. The competition brought together talented fourth-class students who participated in a series of creative legal challenges. During the final, students tackled three key tasks: creating a short film based on the landmark legal case *Dudley v. Stephens*, debating the eligibility of chocolate bar shapes for trademark protection, and solving a legal puzzle inspired by *Donoghue v. Stevenson* — famously involving a snail in a bottle.

After a day filled with teamwork, creativity, and legal reasoning, "The Law Busters" from Stanhope Street Primary School emerged

as the overall winners. The victorious team — Leah Keane, Jeffrey Zhou, James Caffrey, Cole Carey, Afwaan Buraale, and Mason Hanley — showcased outstanding skills and were expertly guided by Law Society trainees Aine Hennessy and Dearbhla Mullins. The Law Busters will now go on to represent Ireland at the Champion of Champions Final at Warwick University this June.

Seven primary schools participated this year, including Paradise Place Educate Together, St. Audoen's National School, Saint Paul's Primary School, Stanhope Street Primary School, Loreto Senior Primary School, City Quay National School, and St. Mary's Primary School in Belfast. Special recognition was given to the teachers from St. Mary's Primary School, who travelled to Dublin to support their students.

The success of the event was made possible thanks to the dedication of 14 Law Society trainees who spent four weeks facilitating School Tasking sessions in schools. Their commitment to sparking students' curiosity about the law was essential to preparing the teams for competition. Trainees including Lauren Humphries, Sharon Casey Gray, Avril Holton, Rachel Barclay, and others played a vital role in this year's program, with particular acknowledgment of the coaching efforts of Dearbhla Mullins and Aine Hennessy.

The School Tasking initiative continues to grow year-on-year, blending legal education with creativity, critical thinking, and teamwork. Through partnerships with universities and legal institutions, the program fosters a strong foundation in legal literacy among young learners, inspiring future generations to engage with the law in meaningful ways.



The Stanhope Street team pictured with their facilitators, PPC trainees Luke Montaine, Katelyn Dunleavy Larkin, Aine Hennessy, and Dearbhla Mullin.



KERRY STUDENT WINS THE NATIONAL GRÁINNE O'NEILL MEMORIAL LEGAL ESSAY COMPETITION

Congratulations to Hazel Barrett from Presentation Secondary School, Listowel, the winner of the Law Society National Gráinne O'Neill Memorial Legal Essay Competition 2025.

We were delighted to welcome 30 finalists, their parents and teachers to the Law Society on the 14 May for a celebratory event where the 2025 winners were revealed.

The Law Society has hosted the national competition for the past three years. It invites TY students from across the country to submit a 1,500-word legal essay on a specific topic. This year's theme was the role the law can play in addressing hate crime.

The competition aims to inspire young people's legal learning by encouraging students from a wide range of backgrounds to consider contemporary justice issues.

Alanna Crean (Loreto College St Stephen's Green, Dublin) took second prize and Saoirse O'Connor Buckley (Coláiste Muire, Cork) came third.

Six merit certificates were awarded to:

Julie Murphy (Scoil Mhuire, Cork), Angelina Sewell (Sacred Heart School Tullamore, Offaly), Honor Geary (Loreto Community School, Donegal), Donncha O'Keefe (Coláiste Choilm, Cork), Mary Nderesi (Lucan Community College, Dublin), and Donagh White (Lucan Community College, Dublin).

The competition honours the life and legacy of the late Judge The competition honours the life and legacy of the late Judge Gráinne O'Neill, who became the youngest judge in Ireland when she was appointed to the District Court in 2014. She died in 2018 following a period of illness. During her life and, especially, during her years as a judge, she worked diligently to apply the law in a fair, rigorous and compassionate manner.







CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GRADUATES OF THE CERTIFICATE IN PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Pictured at the conferral ceremony are :-

Back Row: Anne-Marie Blaney, Tara Rush, Paul Breslin, Yvonne Ussher, Ruth Tracey, Dr. Alison Egan, Keith Kierans, Martin Cooney, Patricia Harvey. Front Row: Sandra Campbell, Geraldine Rafferty, Lisa McGoldrick, Dr. Rachael Hession, Mary Duffy, Dr. Gabriel Brennan, Katherine Kane and Mary Upton.



YOUNGER MEMBERS COMMITTEE NETWORKING EVENT

On Thursday 10 April, the Law Society's Younger Members Committee held its first event of 2025, which saw over 50 attendees attend an early morning breakfast networking event.

The event, *Networking Nexus: Stalking, harassment and unwanted conduct*, was centred around a discussion from leading family law expert Keith Walsh SC, who gave insights into stalking, harassment,

and unwanted conduct. The event was a prime opportunity to meet colleagues and grow networks while exploring this important topic.

The YMC was established to identify, explore and promote issues affecting members of our profession across the country who are in their first seven years of legal practice. The YMC aims to connect solicitor colleagues and foster links with peer organisations in Ireland and other jurisdictions.

COUNSELLOR SPOTLIGHT: TRISH HOWARD – CREATING CALM IN A CROSSROADS MOMENT



With a professional background that spans corporate marketing, community education, and psychotherapy, **Trish Howard** brings a uniquely broad and grounded perspective to her work with trainee solicitors. A UKCP-registered integrative psychotherapist, Trish is deeply committed to helping students navigate the personal and professional crossroads that legal training often represents.

Before moving into counselling and psychotherapy, Trish worked in marketing and market research - an experience that gives her insight into the pressures and performance-driven environments trainees may later face in their legal careers. Her time spent working in community and adult education organisations across the UK and Ireland, as well as serving as chairperson of a mental health charity, has further enriched her compassionate and accessible therapeutic style.

Understanding the Blackhall Experience

For Trish, the time trainees spend at Blackhall is both distinctive and revealing.

“Blackhall is remembered fondly by many in the profession, but it can also be surprisingly challenging,” she reflects. “It offers a pause - time to explore new activities, form friendships, and step away from rigid routines. But with less structure, it can also bring about feelings of regression, a return to earlier emotional patterns, and questions around belonging or imposter syndrome.”

She sees counselling during this period as a powerful opportunity for reflection.

“It’s a natural pause point, a chance for students to think about where they’ve been and where they’re going. The space to reflect can make all the difference.”

Supporting Stress Through the Body and Mind

Trish’s integrative approach places particular focus on the body’s experience of stress.

“When students are under pressure, it’s often helpful to not only name what’s happening emotionally, but also notice what’s

happening physically. Where do they feel it? What is their body telling them?”

This mind-body awareness is key to her approach, and she finds that simply having a space to bring stress - without judgment - can be a powerful form of relief for many students.

Encouraging Early Engagement with Support

One of Trish’s key messages for students is this: don’t wait for a crisis to reach out.

“Having access to free counselling at this point in your life is a gift. Even if you’re not in crisis, it’s a great time to learn how therapy works and how it might help you down the line,” she says.

She also encourages students to speak up if they’re in urgent need of support.

“We’re a responsive, caring team. If a student is struggling, we want to hear from them - we’ll do our best to offer timely help.”

A Special Relationship in a Unique Context

While Trish and her colleagues may not come from legal backgrounds, she feels a strong connection to the trainee population.

“It’s a truly lovely group of people to work with. Over the years, we’ve developed a real fondness for the trainee solicitors and an appreciation of the pressures they face,” she says. “There’s something uniquely supportive about the counselling relationship in this setting. We bring insights from our own profession - such as working with vicarious trauma and maintaining confidentiality - that can really resonate in the legal training world.”

Trish’s thoughtful, empathetic approach helps students feel seen, supported, and more in tune with themselves at a pivotal time in their lives. Her presence on the team is a reminder that sometimes, simply pausing to check in - with oneself and with a counsellor - can offer clarity and strength for the road ahead.



CALL TO ACTION



If you’ve ever availed of the Trainee Counselling Service, we’d love to hear what it meant to you. We’re gathering a few short reflections from past trainees to help us show others they’re not alone and to shape how we grow Psychological Services going forward.

Big or small, anonymous or named your experience could make a real difference. Want to share? ps@LawSociety.ie



ARTICLES FOR INCLUSION IN THE NEXT EDITION SHOULD BE SENT TO: Rebecca Raftery, Editor, The Law School News, Blackhall Place, Dublin 7. **E-mail:** r.raftery@lawsociety.ie



KEEP UP WITH OUR LATEST NEWS

Twitter @lawsocEdu

Facebook The Law School – Law Society of Ireland

LinkedIn The Law School – Law Society of Ireland | The Law School Professional Training | Diploma Centre

NEW

LAW SOCIETY MICRO-CREDENTIALS

The Law Society is delighted to launch a suite of new, innovative micro-credentials. These short, specialised courses explore key areas of law and are designed to equip participants with both legal expertise and practical skills.

Delivered online over 15 hours, these bite-sized courses allow for self-paced learning. They are assessed and result in the award of a digital micro-credential upon successful completion.

LAW SOCIETY MICRO-CREDENTIALS STARTING IN AUTUMN 2025

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|
|  | Artificial Intelligence (AI) |  | Foundations of Trauma-Informed Practice |
|  | Banking and Finance |  | Investment Funds |
|  | Child Law |  | Insolvency |
|  | Commercial Leasing |  | Legal Practice Irish |
|  | Construction Law |  | Alternative Dispute Resolution |
|  | Corporate Transactions |  | Social Media and the Law |
|  | Data Protection |  | Sports Law |
|  | Employment Law |  | Advanced Probate and Tax |
|  | Environmental Law and Climate Change | | |

Skillnet Ireland is funded from the National Training Fund and the European Union through the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

**Fees for Law Society Skillnet micro-credentials vary, please see website for subsidised fees.*

LAW SOCIETY SKILLNET MICRO-CREDENTIALS

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Executive Coaching and Mentoring |
|  | Communications Skills for Legal Leaders |
|  | Bookkeeping and Accounts for a Legal Practice |



STACKABLE

The advantage of these programmes is that they can be 'stacked', one-by-one, over time to lead to a greater award from the Law Society of Ireland. The completion of two micro-credentials results in the award of a Certificate, and the completion of four micro-credentials leads to the award of a Diploma.



**These awards are relevant to solicitors and barristers. Other professionals will be awarded an Advanced Certificate in Legal Studies or an Advanced Diploma in Legal Studies.*

FEE: €950 (10% discount for Trainees)

To find out more, or to apply, please visit our website: www.lawsociety.ie/microcreds